(c) Details of assessed demand, availability and sales of major fertilizers since the 2004 is as under:—

(Qty. in lakh MT)

	Season	Assessed Demand	Availability	Sales	Closing Stock
URE	Kharif 2004	105.73	106.60	97.82	8.79
	Rabi 2004-05	10835	117.08	107.67	9.40
	Kharif 2005	114.39	116.20	107.67	8.53
	Rabi 2005-06	119.86	125.56*		
DAP	Kharif 2004	31.21	33.31	23.65	9.65
	Rabi 2004-05	39.39	40.23	37.13	3.11
	Kharif 2005	33.45	36.81	25.17	11.63
	Rabi 2005-06	44.61	48.92*		
MOP	Kharif 2004	10.84	12.53	10.99	1.53
	Rabi 2004-05	12.37	13.33	12.11	1.22
	Kharif 2005	13.89	18.82	13.25	9.54
	Rabi 2005-06	14.99	25.49*		

*Estimated Availability

(d) The Department is supplementing availability through imports as and when required.

Prime Minister's Task Force for drug price ceiling

25. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Task Force has recommended for fixing ceiling on the drug prices and the same can be linked to the Wholesale Price Index;

(b) whether the Task Force has also recommended that the Drugs (Price Control) Order, 1995 be given a legislative framework;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the other major recommendations made by the Task Force; and

(e) the action Government have taken, so far, on this recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (e) A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Adviser, Planning Commission was constituted to explore options other than price control to make available life saving drugs at reasonable prices. The Task Force has submitted its report to the Government on the 20th September, 2005. Some of the salient recommendations of Task Force are, that Price Controls should be imposed on the 'essentiality' of the drug and not on the basis of turnover and it should be applied only to formulations and not to bulk drugs. Some of the other major recommendations of Task Force are to promote generic drugs, to encourage public health facilities to revive the Public Sector Enterprises in the manufacture of drugs, to provide fiscal incentives in R&D activities in drugs, to provide financial support for implementation of Schedule M of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, to enact Drugs and Therapeutics (Regulation) Act, to establish a National Authority on Drugs and Therapeutics (NADT), to establish price negotiation process for new patented drugs, to streamline the bulk procurement regime, to exempt the excise duty, customs duty and other levies on cancer and anti HIV/AIDS drugs, to establish the State Illness Funds in the States/ Union Territories for BPL families, to reduce the excise duty on drugs from 16 to 8%, to enhance the exemption limit of SSI units from Rs. 1 crores to Rs. 5 crores, to establish a Settlement Commission which is authorized to settle the disputed overcharged amount from the pharma companies.

The Task Force has recommended that the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) should form the basis of drugs to be considered for intensive price monitoring, ceiling price and for imposition of price control, if necessary and to start the process, the Government should announce the ceiling price of the drugs contained in NLEM (other than the drugs procured by hospitals directly and which an individual does not have to purchase from the market) on the basis of the weighted average prices of the top three brands by value of single ingredient formulations prevailing in the market as on 1.4.2005. Further, till the time-when bulk procurement procedure is streamlined and reliable data is generated, the ceiling prices should be allowed to rise on the basis of the Wholesale Price Index for manufactured goods.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Pharmaceuticals) and the Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Advisor, Planning

Commission and feedback from other stakeholders Government have formulated a draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 (Part-A—excluding pricing) which has been circulated to various stakeholders seeking their comments. Based on the comments received the Government is likely to finalize the new Policy shortly.

Shortage of fertilizers

26. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of fertilizers for the second consecutive year;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether such shortage and delayed availability of fertilizers is hampering crop yield and pushing up prices of agricultural produce in the market;

(d) if so, the details in this regard;

(e) whether Government are considering to create a buffer stock of fertilizers; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE), (a) to (d) No, Sir. The demand and supply of major fertilizers during the last year and in the current year is as under:—

(Qty. in lakh MT)

	Season	Assessed Demand	Availability	Sales	Closing Stock
UREA	Kharif 2004	105.73	106.60	97.82	8.79
	Rabi 2004-05	108.35	117.08	107.67	9.40
	Kharif 2005	114.39	116.20	107.67	8.53
	Rabi 2005-06	119.86	125.56*		
DAP	Kharif 2004	31.21	33.31	23.5	9.65
	Rabi 2004-05	39.39	40.23	37.13	3.11